

AMENDMENT

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph at page 28, lines 9-24, with the following:

The next logical step was to determine the 16S rRNA gene sequence. This technique currently is the method of choice for identification purposes. The identification based on the 16S rRNA gene sequence was determined to be *Leclercia adecarboxylata*. The difference in sequence homology between LAB-1 and *L. adecarboxylata* was only 0.59%. Stackebrandt & Goebel, INT'L J. SYSTEM. BACTERIOL. 44: 846 (1994) would consider this a species level match, however the confidence limits of the data obtained by MIDI LABSTM allowed identification only at the genus level. When the biochemical characteristics of LAB-1 and of *L. adecarboxylata* (9th edition Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology 1994) are compared, there are yet again, numerous differences. The differences led to the questions regarding this method.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 5, 6 and 8.

Please replace presently pending claims 11, 17 and 20 with the following claims 11,
17 and 20:

11. (Amended) An exopolysaccharide produced by the bacterium of claim 1.
17. (Amended) The biofilm of claim 16, which is produced by the bacterium of claim 1.
20. (Amended) The plasma expander of claim 18, wherein the exopolysaccharide is produced by the bacterium of claim 1.

Please cancel claims 23-42.